a report in July disclosing ''stunning, stunning flaws'' in the security of certain electronic voting machines widely in use, precipitating an avalanche of further studies and reviews, raising further red flags among jurisdictions considering new equipment purchases, and generating further uncertainty and concern about the use of privately owned and controlled voting equipment that produces results that cannot be meaningfully audited in any way. Reports of irregularities on voting machines abound, but I will mention just one. In a recent election conducted in Boone County, Indiana, a ''computer glitch'' reportedly ''spewed out impossible numbers.'' In a jurisdiction that had fewer than 19,000 registered voters, 144,000 votes were reported. The County Clerk said she ''just about had a heart attack.'' Although a ''corrected'' count of about 5,300 votes was eventually produced, how can we know it was in—fact correct? The fact is, without an independent voter verified paper trail, we can never know.

The New York Assembly passed a law in June mandating voter verified paper trails. The State of Illinois passed a similar law in August. In November, the Secretary of State of California mandated voter verified paper trails. Legislation requiring voter verified paper trails is also pending in Maine, and I have been told that similar bills are imminently to be introduced in Maryland and Virginia. Broad coalitions of public interest groups are now taking definitive action to lobby in favor of voter verified paper trails. The Communications Workers of America passed a resolution in August stating that the CWA ''endorse and support the use of only DRE and 'touch screen' machines with the ability to provide the voter with a view of a paper ballot that is stored and available for audits.'' A large New York-based coalition including at least five disability advocacy groups issued a statement in the fall urging that ''New voting machines should provide a 'voter-verifiable paper audit trail' and incorporate 'data-to-voice' technology to ensure full access by all.'' Grass roots organizations lobbying for my bill and for voter verified paper trails are forming all over the country. The resolution in favor of voter verifiable audit trails posted by Verifiedvoting.org has more than 1,000 endorsers. An online petition in favor of my Voter Confidence Act which had 50 signatures in July has more than 4,000 signatures now. An online petition in favor of voter verified paper trails sponsored by Martin Luther King III, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Investigative Journalist Greg Palast has more than 60,000 signatures.

I introduced this legislation because I think that if we don't have an election system that voters can trust, voter participation will decline and our democracy will deteriorate. Citizens from all over the country, sharing this concern, have spoken out, indeed shouted out, that we should act. The extent and depth of discussion on the Internet and in town meetings is striking.

This is not a partisan issue. I stand today with 90 Members from both sides of the aisle, who are just as deeply concerned about the integrity of our electoral system as I am. They are just as deeply troubled by the prospect of private ownership and control of the vote count as I am. They have heard from and responded to the concerns of their constituents about insecure, unauditable voting equipment just as I have. Some of them have even told me that—second only to the Iraq conflict—the issue of the verifiability of election results is the one most frequently raised in public forums. And one thing that has been reiterated to me time and again—even by people who have not made their minds up on the issue—is that the issue is not going to go away.

We have a responsibility to demonstrate that our democracy stands above all others in its unimpeachability. New York Times columnist Paul Krugman concluded his recent column, entitled ''Hack the Vote,'' by saying, ''Let's be clear: the credibility of U.S. democracy may be at stake.'' When the results are in after the next election, there must be no question. There must be no doubt. We must all feel certain that the voice of the people, as expressed in the voting booth, was heard. November 2004 is just around the corner. When this body reconvenes in January, I urge it to consider this legislation a top priority.

AUGUST 14TH BLACKOUT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment on the Bush Administration's report on the August 14 blackout that left millions of people in New York without power, some for days.

The U.S.-Canadian outage task force on November 19 issued a report titled ''Causes of the August 14th Blackout in the United States and Canada,'' saying 50 million people from Indiana to Massachusetts and Canada went without electricity because of untrimmed trees and a computer glitch. But the New York Times reported on November 25 that ''a variety of experts now say the [report's] findings were too narrow, ignoring the federal government's role in the recent reshaping of the power industry.''

We need to know what the truth is. The Times has reported on the blackout as thoroughly as anyone, so this report is very important. Maybe we need an impartial investigator to follow up on what they are reporting.

In the November 25 article, Alan Richardson of the American Public Power Association says that maybe the federal government didn't address what mistakes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) made in breaking up the utility industry ''because the answer is not one that's comfortable politically.''

Commenting on the organization the FERC approved to run the transmission wires in the Midwest, transmission expert Robert Blohm is quoted in the article as saying ''How come nobody has examined this horror story, of how they set up an entity 10 times more complex than any known one, in such a short period of time?''

John Casazza, a retired executive from a New Jersey utility, says in the article that ''There are a lot of aspects in this blackout that have not been touched by [the Administration's] report. . . . The root causes are what has happened as a result of our government policy.''

If the experts think policy set by the government is the cause of the blackout, why are the government officials who made these bad policy decisions the ones that are writing the report on what caused the blackout?

Back on September 23, the Times reported that ''Experts now think that on Aug. 14, northern Ohio had a severe shortage of reactive power, which ultimately caused the power plant and transmission line failures that set the blackout in motion. Demand for reactive power was unusually high because of a large volume of long-distance transmissions streaming through Ohio to areas, including Canada, that needed to import power to meet local demand.'' These long-distance transmissions were mainly by ''independent power producers,'' or IPPs, who often do not produce any reactive power. The article quoted Raymond Palmieri, who is responsible for transmission reliability in the Midwest, as saying reactive power ''is definitely a contributor'' to the blackout.

Who has been pushing for these long-distance transmissions by IPPs? The FERC. They had experts saying for at least two months before the official blackout report came out that it was a problem. But what did that official blackout report, which FERC and the DOE directed and wrote, say about the role of reactive power and IPPs? ''[T]he suggestion that IPPs may have contributed to the difficulties of reliability management on August 14 because they don't provide reactive power is misplaced.''

There is nothing wrong with independent power producers. They perform a valuable role in meeting the nation's electricity needs. But if the government's blackout report barely even mentions the role of reactive power, and doesn't mention at all whether, in light of more long distance transmissions, someone should have changed the rules to make sure there was enough of it, when experts say it was ''definitely a contributor,'' something isn't right.

While the FERC has been pushing for more long-distance transmission, Congress has been hearing from experts that the transmission system wasn't designed to operate that way, and that using it for long-distance transmission reduces reliability. At the House Energy and Commerce Committee's blackout hearing on September 4, Gene McGrath, the CEO of Consolidated Edison, said ''I think as an engineer and as an operator having the generation as close to the load center as it can be done is the best interest of everybody. . . . [A]s you separate generation from load you introduce another component. As you introduce other components you can introduce costs and you can introduce reliability problems.'' That is, generating the power two or three States away causes problems. We need to have the power generated close to where it is used.

Is that issue even discussed in the Administration's blackout report? No—not even a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents went without power on August 14. It's not just an inconvenience, it's a danger in many cases to be left without electricity. Life-support equipment, traffic signals, elevators, and so many other important devices all depend on electricity. But we seem to have a situation where our own government's review of the blackout steers away from even looking into what seem to be very important contributing factors.

FERC Chairman Pat Wood testified before the House Energy and Commerce Committee many times in the past couple of years, telling

us that to maintain reliability for the wholesale markets his policies promote, we need to beef up the transmission grid. But now that we've had the biggest blackout in our history, FERC doesn't admit its policies that stress the grid had anything to do with it. Chairman Wood's Senate testimony on November 20 was ''the [transmission] operator's primary charge is to work the system you've got. . . . Markets do not compromise reliability.'' So no matter if FERC sprayed water on the road in the freezing cold, it's your fault if you crash your car.

If we don't get an accurate picture from government investigators about the causes of the blackout, we will be dooming ourselves to more disruptions, dangers, and inconveniences in the future. I am not willing to allow that.

I ask that we consider whether we need an independent investigation of the causes of the blackout so we can do what needs to be done to prevent the next blackout from occurring.

HONORING LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the good work of LaGuardia Community College of Long Island City in Queens, New York. LaGuardia Community College serves one of the most diverse student bodies in the U.S. within one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in the U.S. Over the years, men and women from all over the world have called LaGuardia Community College their home. Over the years, LaGuardia Community College has quietly and diligently provided a first-class education for students of all economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

LaGuardia Community College has served my community and the world for decades, and its mission has earned it the title of The World's Community College. However, they recently earned another distinction—nationally recognized community college. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement studied approximately 300 colleges, looking at 10 different categories. This non-profit found that LaGuardia Community College ranked in the top 3 of 13 large community colleges in North America. This ranking confirms what so many of us have known for so long—that LaGuardia Community College is not only The World's Community College. It is also the world's premier community college.

Of course, this distinction would not be possible without the work of countless administrators, professors, students, and friends from around the community. I would particularly like to thank LaGuardia Community College President, Dr. Gail O. Mellow for her vision. It is because of leaders like her that LaGuardia Community College can achieve such an incredible level of success.

Our world needs an understanding, dedicated, well-educated populace now more than ever. Our world is dependant on the students that come out of LaGuardia Community College and the good work that they do. For those reasons, we all owe the school our respect and gratitude.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN FOR IMPROVED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution commending the governments of India and Pakistan for their efforts to achieve peace and stability in the South Asian region.

For years, India and Pakistan have been the victims of numerous terrorist attacks, which have greatly heightened religious and ethnic tensions in the troubled region. Discord amongst Hindu and Muslim populations has led to a war of attrition, whereby insurgents on both sides sneak across the border to commit murder and destruction before sneaking back across.

India and Pakistan have a history of disputes going back decades. The most prominent amongst these conflicts has been the territory of Kashmir. India and Pakistan each claim Kashmir as their own, despite the territory having its own distinct population agitating for autonomy. Indian and Pakistani forces have routinely engaged in minor skirmishes along the border. The conflict, more than any other, has led to a destabilizing nuclear arms race in the region, resulting in threats of war and the severing of political, diplomatic, and economic links.

In recent months, however, diplomatic overtures between India and Pakistan have resulted in laudable agreements to improve relations. Since April 2003, India and Pakistan have sent ambassadors, reestablished bus links, and declared the first real cease-fire in the 17-year-old border conflict. Most recently, the two countries resumed air travel and overflight rights with one another. Further, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee has agreed to attend in the near future a regional economic summit in Islamabad, a sure sign of progress.

The resolution I am introducing today congratulates India and Pakistan on their efforts to achieve stability and to seek a peaceful means to resolve their disputes. The resolution also recognizes both countries' efforts in the global war on terrorism and their close partnerships with the United States.

Though both nations still have a long way to go to fully achieve a lasting peace, the House of Representatives should be pleased with their determination to seek a peaceful, economically prosperous road to stability.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by once again referring to the unconscionable acts of violence and terror wrought on both India and Pakistan. I further express my support and encouragement to both nations for their efforts to rebuild diplomatic relations despite trying circumstances.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I ask the House leadership to bring it swiftly to the floor for its consideration.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YOUNG ISRAEL OF NEW HYDE PARK

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 50th anniversary of Young Israel of New Hyde Park, the only Orthodox synagogue in northeast Queens. The synagogue, which boasts a vibrant multi-generational membership, plays a central role in increasing the presence and awareness of Orthodox Judaism in our community.

For half a century, Young Israel of New Hyde Park has provided its members and visitors with many of the things that an Orthodox family looks for and needs: from classes to daily minyanim to a local Boy Scout troop. Now under the leadership of Rabbi Binyamin Hammer, the synagogue, which is just around the corner from Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Hillside Hospital and Schneider Children's Medical Center, has long been known as a place where families and friends of patients can find religious support and Shabbat and Yom Tov hospitality. To this end, a bikur cholim apartment was recently added through the purchase of a house next door to the synagogue. To date it has provided temporary lodging for people from all over the United States, Russia, Italy, Israel and Canada.

Those familiar with this congregation, those who, for 50 years have made it a place of civic support and spiritual development, know that Young Israel is more than just a temple—but a shul, a spiritual home, a place that reflects the highest aspirations of an ancient people living proud and free in this great nation.

I commend Young Israel of New Hyde Park for its continued dedication to our community. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in congratulating the synagogue on the occasion of its 50th anniversary and in wishing Young Israel best wishes for another 50 years.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the 4th Nobel Peace Laureates Summit was held in Rome. At the conclusion of the Summit, the Laureates issued a statement on behalf of this extraordinary gathering that is printed at the end of these remarks. There are too few places in our public dialogue where a universal perspective is encouraged and lauded. The Nobel Peace Prize is one of them. Such civil society institutions are to be encouraged because they are needed to work on global challenges.

The Laureates reinforced in the most eloquent terms the message sent at a recent panel convened by the Bipartisan Task Force on Non-proliferation of which I am Co-chair with my colleague CHRISTOPHER SHAYS (R-Conn.). This panel on ''The Limits of Unilateralism'' included the world-renowned